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Introduction

PURPOSE OF LINC
The Lender Interactive Network Connection (LINC) allows for electronic reporting by lenders to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies, including the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The USDA LINC Home page is located at https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/. Lenders are required to have a level 2 eAuthentication ID and password prior to being authorized in the LINC system. Lenders may refer to an Exhibit in 2-FLP for information on how to create an account with level 2 access.

LINC’s primary electronic reporting functions are:
- Submit status reports (semiannual and default)
- Add loan closing
- View loans
- Lender Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD)

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
Users must have the following hardware and software to access the USDA LINC:
- A personal computer, workstation, or terminal with access to the Internet via a modem or network through an Internet Service Provider (ISP).
- An Internet Web browser that is secure socket layer (SSL) compliant (i.e., Netscape 4.08 or higher or Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.x or higher).
NAVIGATING

The following mechanisms are used to navigate LINC:

- **Hyperlinks** are identified by blue or violet underlined text. Hyperlinks allow users to navigate to a related screen. They are also referred to as “links.”

- **Navigation Bars** are displayed beneath the screen title on most screens. They provide easy access to home pages and several screens in LINC. The hyperlinks provided on the navigation bars vary depending on the screen and the associated functions. The Lender Status Report List screen navigation bar is shown below.

  ![Lender Status Report List]

- **Buttons** are used to elicit an action on the screen or to go to a related screen. Each button’s function is identified on the button itself. Common buttons include:
  - **Submit**—Submit information entered on the screen.
  - **Reset**—Clear the screen of information that was entered but not yet submitted.
  - **Save**—Save any information that was entered on the screen.
  - **Cancel/Back**—Return to the previous screen without saving changes made on the current screen.

  **Note:** Do not use your Web browser’s Back button to navigate LINC.

- **ID Cross Reference**—Search for a particular customer using his or her GLS randomly assigned ID number, tax ID number, or Social Security number (SSN).
SELECTING OPTIONS

There are three ways to select options in LINC. You will use a:

- **Radio button** when you may only select one item.
  - ![Radio buttons](image)

- **Check box** when you may select multiple items.
  ![Check boxes](image)

- **Drop-down menu** to select an item from a list. Click the down arrow on the drop-down menu and select an item from the list.
  ![Drop-down menu](image)
SEARCHING FOR A BORROWER

A list of borrowers will display on a list screen based on information provided by the user. There are two means of populating the list, searching by ID number or by name.

Search by ID Number

All ID numbers have nine digits. Social Security Numbers (SSNs) and Tax ID numbers were the standard but, to safeguard sensitive information, the USDA transitioned to randomly generated ID numbers for borrowers. The Agency assigns each borrower a Borrower ID number when the borrower is first added to the system.

Note: You can cross-reference a borrower’s ID number against a known number, either the borrower’s Tax ID number or SSN, to verify a borrower’s Agency-assigned random ID number. Refer to page 6 for more information on the ID Cross Reference function.

Search by Name

When conducting a search using a person’s name, enter the last name and then the first name, separated by a comma (i.e., last name, first name).

You may:

- Enter “A” in the Name field to display a list of all accounts.
- Search for all names beginning with a specific letter by entering just the letter. For example, enter the letter “S” to display names beginning with “S” in alphabetical order. Enter as much of the name as you know to narrow the search results.
- Narrow the search results by providing as much information as you know in the Include fields. The Include fields will vary depending on which list screen is displayed.
- Use an asterisk (*) as a wild card in place of a single character, multiple characters, or “zero” characters. Zero characters will account for characters that may or may not be in the name. For example, searching for “M*cDonald” will yield both McDonald and MacDonald.
USING THIS GUIDE

This guide provides step-by-step instructions on how to perform tasks related to LINC. These tasks are grouped into two categories:

- **Application Authorization Security Management (AASM) System tasks** are used to add lender-employees in AASM and grant them access to LINC; assign, remove, and maintain employee security role(s) in AASM; and maintain employee information in AASM.

- **Loan Closing/Servicing tasks** are used to add loan closing and pre-authorized debit information, add status reports (semiannual and default), and view and update status reports (semiannual and default).

To use this guide, look up the task you wish to perform in the table of contents and follow the instructions. The instructions list the steps you must perform to complete the task. Additional and optional steps are addressed in the field descriptions or notes. The tasks are not necessarily presented in the sequence needed to process a loan.

There may be more than one way to perform a task. This guide provides step-by-step instructions for one method of performing each task. Alternate methods may be described, but step-by-step instructions are not included.

WHAT IS THE AASM SYSTEM?

AASM is the database that contains lender information and the level 2 eAuth user ID numbers of all lender-employees authorized to participate in electronic reporting. FSA initially, and the lenders’ Security Administrators (SAs) thereafter, will use AASM to authorize lender-employees to access the USDA LINC.

Once authorized in AASM, a lender-employee may use LINC to close guaranteed loans and manage lender status reports (semiannual and default), which keeps the lender’s guaranteed borrowers account information up-to-date in the Agency’s accounting records. Lenders may request more than one SA to be authorized in AASM.

Lenders may refer to the Application Authorization Security Management System tasks included in this guide for instructions on completing AASM tasks.
ID CROSS REFERENCE

You may use the ID Cross Reference function to verify a borrower’s Agency-assigned random ID number. You can access the ID Cross Reference function from the navigation bar on the FSA LINC Home page or from the button provided on the Lender Loan Closing/Administration List screen and the Lender Status Report List screen. To use this function:

1. Enter the known ID number. If the number is not the Agency-assigned random ID or account number, click the Tax ID/SSN radio button and input the Tax ID number or SSN.

2. Click Submit. The ID Cross Reference screen will display the corresponding ID number.
MESSAGE BOARD

The Message Board provides administrative information pertaining to LINC. It is accessible via a link on the navigation bar on the USDA LINC Home page.
Application Authorization Security Management (AASM) System Tasks

Application Authorization Security Management (AASM) System tasks are used to add lender-employees in AASM and grant them access to LINC; assign, remove, and maintain employee security role(s) in AASM; and maintain employee information in AASM.

The following tasks are addressed in this section:

- Add lender-employee
- Remove/modify lender-employee
- Maintain employee information
**ADD LENDER-EMPLOYEE**

The purpose of this task is to add a lender-employee to AASM, including designating their security role.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at [https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/](https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/) Click either the **FSA LINC Home** hyperlink on the navigation bar or the **Farm Service Agency** icon.

2. Click the **Application Authorization** hyperlink.
3. Click **I Agree**.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click **Login**.
5. Click **Add User**.

   **Note:** This screen refreshes as information is submitted and automatically displays the necessary sections and fields.

6. Enter the employee’s eAuth user ID number, phone and extension, and any other information for the employee being added and click **Add Role**.

   **Note:** The screen will refresh to confirm that the eAuth User ID is valid. If the eAuth User ID is invalid, an error message will display.
7. Select **Guaranteed Loan System – Level 2** from the Authorized System drop-down menu.

8. Select the appropriate role from the Security Role drop-down menu.

   **Note:** The following roles in the Security Role drop-down menu do not apply to FSA: Lender Loan Closing, Branch Loan Closing, and Account Cross Reference.

   **Security Roles Ordered in Descending Level of Administrative Functionality:**
   - **Lender Representative** (Allows the user to enter transactions for all of the lender’s branches)
   - **Lender Viewer** (Allows the user view only capabilities of all transactions associated with the lender ID for all branches)
   - **Branch Representative** (Allows the user to enter transactions for only the lender branch for which the user is associated)
   - **Branch Viewer** (Allows the user view only capabilities of all transactions for the branch for which the user is associated)
   - **Lender Loan Closing** (Allows the user to perform loan closing transactions associated with the lender ID for all branches)
   - **Branch Loan Closing** (Allows the user to perform loan closing transactions for only the lender branch for which the user is associated)
   - **Account Cross Reference** (Allows the user view only access to the Id Cross Reference Page)

   **Note:** Each Security Role is defined at the bottom of the current screen (as shown above).
9. Enter the lender’s ID number in the Lender ID field or select it from the Lender ID dropdown menu, if available.

10. Click Branch List.
11. Select the hyperlink in the Branch Nbr column to populate the USDA Assigned Branch Nbr field.

   **Note:** This step is required even if the Security Role has access to all lender branches.

12. Click the FSA check box in the Loan Program field and click **Save**.
13. Click **Yes** to confirm submission.

14. Click **OK**.

**Note:** The employee added will receive a confirmation email stating he or she has been authorized by the Security Administrator to use the Guaranteed Loan System (GLS) via LINC.
REMOVE/MODIFY LENDER-EMPLOYEE

The purpose of this task is to remove or modify an employee’s security role. Removing all roles assigned to a lender-employee will result in the employee having an inactive status in the system.

Note: Whenever a lender’s employee leaves the institution, the lender must remove all security roles assigned to prevent access to the system.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/. Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.

2. Click the Application Authorization hyperlink.
3. Click I Agree.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click Login.
5. Enter the employee’s eAuth User ID number and click **Submit**.

6. Select **Maintain Role** from the Action drop-down menu and click the hyperlink in the Role column for the correct employee.
7. To modify an employee’s role, select the applicable Lender ID by clicking the radio button in the Select column. The screen will refresh. Go to Step 8.

To remove an employee’s security role, click **Remove Role**.

Click **Yes** to confirm removal.
8. Select the applicable security role from the Security Role drop-down menu. Click the FSA check box in the Loan Program field and click Save.

   **Note:** The following roles in the Security Role drop-down menu do not apply to FSA: Lender Loan Closing, Branch Loan Closing, and Account Cross Reference.

MAINTAIN EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

The purpose of this task is to maintain an employee’s information in AASM.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/. Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.

2. Click the Application Authorization hyperlink.
3. Click I Agree.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click Login.
5. Enter the employee’s eAuth User ID number and click **Submit**.

6. Select **Maintain User** from the Action drop-down menu and click the hyperlink in the eAuth User ID column.
7. Enter the information to be changed and click **Save**.

![Confirmation Dialog](image)

I understand I am providing all information included on forms and attachments to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for review and processing.

My statements on all submitted forms and attachments are true, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are made in good faith. I understand that a knowing and willing false statement can be punished by a fine or imprisonment or both. (See Title 18, Section 1001, of the United States Code.)

Are you sure you want to Submit the package?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

8. Click **Yes** to confirm submission.

![Update Confirmation](image)

9. Click **OK**.
Loan Closing/Servicing Tasks

Loan closing tasks are used to add loan closing and pre-authorized debit information; add status reports (semiannual and default), view and update status reports (semiannual and default), view search results of all status reports that fall within a specified date range, and view search results for borrower’s submitted status reports from a specified date on and by loan type.

The following tasks are addressed in this section:

- Add lender loan closing information
- Add lender status report
- Add lender default status report
- Historical status report search
- Submitted status report search
- View/update lender status report
- View/update default status report
- Terminate a guaranteed loan
- Add lender pre-authorized debit information
ADD LENDER LOAN CLOSING INFORMATION

The purpose of this task is to provide loan closing information to FSA.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/. Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.

2. Click the Lender Loan Closing/Administration hyperlink.
3. Click I Agree.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e, level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click Login.
5. Enter the borrower’s ID number in the Borrower ID field and select **Obligations** from the Request Type drop-down menu.

   **Note:** To display a list of all accounts, click the **Borrower Name/State** radio button and enter “A” in the Borrower Name field. Select **Farm Program** from the Program Area drop-down menu to further narrow the search results.

6. Click **Submit**.

7. Select **Add Loan Closing** from the Action drop-down menu. Click the hyperlink in the Borrower ID/Tax ID column for the obligation to be closed.

8. Verify the loan to be closed and click **OK**.
9. Enter all necessary data.

   **Note:** Data fields are pre-populated based on the application, loan guarantee request, and obligation information.

10. Enter any additional information (e.g., comments) and click **Submit**.

   **Notes:**
   - Correct any error(s) recognized by the system and click **Submit** again.
   - Popup blockers must be turned off in order to submit data.
11. Click **OK**.

12. Click **Yes**.

13. Click **OK**.

14. The GLS Add Loan Closing screen will redisplay. Create a screen print if necessary and click **Cancel** to exit. The Lender Loan Closing/Administration List screen will display.

   **Note:** The status of the loan just closed will remain “Obligated” until FSA accepts the loan closing.

Once a loan closing is processed by FSA, lenders may review it. In step 5 above, select **Loans** from the Request Type drop-down menu and click **Submit**. Click the hyperlink in the Borrower ID column for the loan you wish to view.
ADD LENDER STATUS REPORT

The purpose of this task is to add semiannual status reports as required by FSA.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/. Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.

2. Click the Lender Status Report List hyperlink.
3. Click I Agree.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click Login.
5. A list of all borrowers attributed to the lender’s ID number will display automatically. To search for a specific borrower, click the Borrower ID radio button, enter the borrower’s ID number, and click Submit.

Note: To further narrow the search results, select from the Loan Type, Report Type or Receipt Status drop-down menus and/or enter a date range (e.g., 01/31/2011 and 02/28/2011) in the Report Effective Date fields in the Include section. Click Submit.
6. Select **Add Lender Status Report** from the Action drop-down menu.

7. Click the hyperlink for the appropriate borrower in the Effective Date column.

8. Select **Status Report** from the Report Type drop-down menu.

9. Enter information in the Borrower ID, Agency Loan Number, and Effective Date fields. Click **Continue**.

   **Note:** The Effective Date is the “as of” date of the financial information, not the date that the user enters the information in the system.
10. Enter all necessary data. Click **Submit**.

**Note:** Any discrepancy or error recognized by the system will prompt an error message to appear. Resolve any error(s) and click **Submit** again.
11. Click **Yes** to confirm submission.

12. Click **OK**. The system will display the Lender Status Report List screen.
ADD LENDER DEFAULT STATUS REPORT

The purpose of this task is to add default status reports as required by FSA.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/. Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.

2. Click the Lender Status Report List hyperlink.
3. Click I Agree.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click Login.
5. A list of all borrowers attributed to the lender’s ID number will display automatically. To search for a specific borrower, click the **Borrower ID** radio button, enter the borrower’s ID number, and click **Submit**.

**Note:** To further narrow the search results, select from the Loan Type, Report Type, or Receipt Status drop-down menus and/or enter a date range (e.g., 01/31/2011 and 02/28/2011) in the Report Effective Date fields in the Include section. Click **Submit**.
6. Select **Add Lender Status Report** from the Action drop-down menu.

7. Click the hyperlink for the appropriate borrower in the Effective Date column.

8. Select **Default Report** from the Report Type drop-down menu.

9. Enter information in the Borrower ID, Agency Loan Number, and Effective Date fields. Click **Continue**.

**Note:** The Effective Date is the “as of” date of the financial information, not the date that the user enters the information in the system.
10. Enter all necessary data and select the applicable delinquency code. Click **Submit**.
11. Click **Yes** to confirm submission.

12. Click **OK**. The system will display the Lender Status Report List screen.
**HISTORICAL STATUS REPORT SEARCH**

The purpose of this task is to display search results of all status reports that fall within a specified date range.

1. From the Lender Status Report List screen, click **Historical Report List** to open the Historical Status Report List screen in a new window.

2. Enter the lender’s ID number in the Lender ID field and enter a date range in the Beginning Date and Ending Date fields (e.g., 01/31/2011 and 02/28/2011). Click **Submit**.
3. Review the status reports. To search for a status report within another date range, click **Reset** to clear all information and repeat step 2 above. Click **Cancel** to return to the Lender Status Report List screen.
SUBMITTED STATUS REPORT SEARCH

The purpose of this task is to display search results for borrower’s submitted status reports from a specified date on and by loan type.

1. From the Lender Status Report List screen, click **Submitted Report List** to open the Submitted Status Report List screen in a new window.

2. Enter a starting date in the Beginning Date field and select the appropriate loan type from the Loan Type drop-down menu. Click **Submit**.
3. Review the status reports. To search for submitted reports within another set of search parameters, click **Reset** to clear all information and repeat step 2 above. Click **Cancel** to return to the Lender Status Report List screen.
VIEW/UPDATE LENDER STATUS REPORT

The purpose of this task is to submit semiannual status reports as required by FSA.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/. Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.

2. Click the Lender Status Report List hyperlink.
3. Click **I Agree**.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click **Login**.
5. A list of all borrowers attributed to the lender’s ID number will display automatically. To search for a specific borrower, click the Borrower ID radio button, enter the borrower’s ID number, and click Submit.

Note: To further narrow the search results, select from the Loan Type, Report Type, or Receipt Status drop-down menus and/or enter a date range (e.g., 01/31/2011 and 02/28/2011) in the Report Effective Date fields in the Include section. Click Submit.

   **Note:** Click **Submitted Report List** to display a list of all status reports that have been entered and submitted to FSA. Refer to Submitted Status Report Search on page 45 for more information.

7. Click the hyperlink for the appropriate borrower in the Effective Date column.
8. Enter all necessary data and applicable comments in the Comments section. Click **Submit**.

**Note:** Any discrepancy or error recognized by the system will prompt an error message to appear. Resolve any error(s) and click **Submit** again.
Note: If a loan in default status is changed to Current in step 8, specify the disposition of the delinquency information and click **Continue**.

9. Click **Yes** to confirm submission.

10. Click **OK**. The Lender Status Report List screen will display.
VIEW/UPDATE DEFAULT STATUS REPORT

The purpose of this task is to submit default status reports as required by FSA.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/. Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.

2. Click the Lender Status Report List hyperlink.
3. Click I Agree.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click Login.
5. A list of all borrowers attributed to the lender’s ID number will display automatically. To search for a specific borrower, click the **Borrower ID** radio button, enter the borrower’s ID number, and click **Submit**.

**Note:** To further narrow the search results, select from the Loan Type, Report Type, or Receipt Status drop-down menus and/or enter a date range (e.g., 01/31/2011 and 02/28/2011) in the Report Effective Date fields in the Include section. Click **Submit**.

7. Click the hyperlink for the appropriate borrower in the Effective Date column.
8. Enter all necessary data. Any comments provided by the lender are required in the Comments section, for loans in default status. Click Submit.

   **Note:** Any discrepancy or error recognized by the system will prompt an error message to appear. Resolve any error(s) and click Submit again.
9. Click **Yes** to confirm submission of the default status report update.

10. Click **OK**.
**TERMINATE A GUARANTEED LOAN**

The purpose of this task is to terminate a guaranteed loan.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at [https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/](https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/). Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.

2. Click the Lender Status Report List hyperlink.
3. Click **I Agree**.

4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click **Login**.
5. A list of all borrowers attributed to the lender’s ID number will display automatically. To search for a specific borrower, click the Borrower ID radio button, enter the borrower’s ID number, select Received from the Receipt Status drop-down menu and click Submit.

6. Select Add Lender Status Report from the Action drop-down menu.

7. Click the hyperlink for the appropriate borrower in the Effective Date column.
8. Select **Status Report** from the Report Type drop-down menu.

9. Enter the effective date (e.g. 03/31/year) and click **Continue**.

**Notes:**
- The Effective Date is the “as of” date of the financial information, not the date that the user enters the information in the system.
- Click **Cancel** to return to the GLS Loan List screen.
10. If the loan has been terminated and the loan guarantee has been returned to FSA, click the **Terminate Guarantee** check box. Enter any applicable comments in the Comments section. Click **Submit**.
11. A confirmation message box will appear to confirm that you want to terminate the guaranteed loan. Click **OK** to continue; click **Cancel** to return to the GLS Status Report screen.
**ADD LENDER PRE-AUTHORIZED DEBIT INFORMATION**

The purpose of this task is to add routing information so that guarantee fees may be collected electronically via the pre-authorized debit (PAD) process.

Lenders must authorize the Agency in writing to electronically debit their account. Field offices may accept an ACH Vender/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form; a letter, a memo, or an email from the lender; or the lender may input the authorization statement in the Lender Loan Comments section of the GLS Add Loan Closing screen. The correspondence should specify the applicable loan(s); a “blanket statement” is not acceptable.

1. Go to the USDA LINC Home page at [https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/](https://usdalinc.sc.egov.usda.gov/). Click either the FSA LINC Home hyperlink on the navigation bar or the Farm Service Agency icon.
2. Click the **Lender PAD Account Maintenance** hyperlink.

3. Click **I Agree**.
4. Enter your User ID (i.e., level 2 eAuth ID) number and password. Click **Login**.

5. Click **Add Account**.
6. Enter all necessary data. Select the appropriate type of account from the Account Type drop-down menu.

**Notes:**
- Routing and account ID numbers must be entered twice to ensure accuracy.
- Click the **Global Account** check box to make the account available to all branches of this lender ID via LINC.

7. Click **Submit**.

8. Click **OK** to add another account; click **Cancel** to proceed. Clicking **Cancel** will not cancel the account you just entered.
The newly added account will display on the Lender Pre-Authorized Debit screen.
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